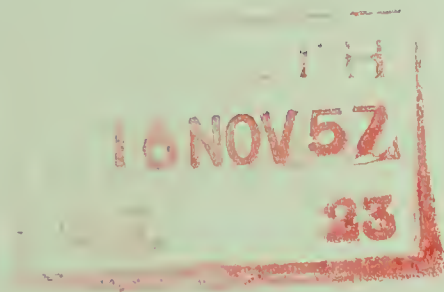


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The Urban District of Kirkham



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Annual Health Report

for the Year 1956

Medical Officer of Health :

C. ROBERTSON WILSON, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.(Edin.).

Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector :

E. RIDDIOUGH, M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I., A.M.I.P.H.E., L.I.O.B.



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HEALTH COMMITTEE

Councillor Mrs. M. Carr (Chairman)

Councillor Mrs. D. G. M. Sanderson

Councillor T. Ward, J.P., C.C.

Councillor R. Lavelle

Councillor J. Whiteside

Councillor T. A. Ruxton

Councillor J. Lawler

Councillor H. Jones

Councillor J. Whiteside (Woodlands)

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF

Medical Officer of Health:

C. ROBERTSON WILSON, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H. (Edin.)

Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector:

E. RIDDIOUGH, M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I., A.M.I.P.H.E., L.I.O.B.

Clerk: N. Swift, A.C.C.S.

Annual Health Report

of the

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE YEAR 1956

To the Chairman and Members of the Kirkham
Urban District Council.

Mr. Chairman, Lady and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present to you the Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the year 1956.

The health of the Urban District was generally satisfactory and there were no major outbreaks of illness. Twenty-four cases of Scarlet Fever and forty-seven of Measles were the only notable infections prevalent. On the commonly found alternate year basis for outbreaks of Measles, 1956 should have been a clear year, but our revisit came earlier than anticipated starting in November and December, 1956. I believe quite a number of children missed their school Christmas parties on this account.

The birth rate for 1956 was a little higher than that for 1955 but not as high as was that for 1954. The death rate at 11.0 per thousand was less than a half per thousand lower than that for 1955. The Infantile and Maternal Mortalities remained nil.

Forty-eight deaths occurred during the year, twenty-one male and twenty-seven female. Thirty-eight of these deaths are attributable as follows:

Diseases of the Heart and Circulation	19
Cerebral Haemorrhage, Embolism or Thrombosis ...	12
Malignant Growths	7

It will be seen that, broadly speaking, these tend to be the degenerative diseases of advancing years.

It is good to see that we have had no notified cases of Diphtheria. Immunisation of the children is mainly responsible for this. Let us hope that the immunisation against poliomyelitis which started in

the district in 1956 may prove as effective in the long run as has that against diphtheria. The Tuberculosis rate also keeps low with only three notified new cases in the area and no deaths.

My thanks are due to the members of the Health Committee for their interest in the work and to my colleagues on the Health Department staff for their ready help in carrying it out.

Yours faithfully,

C. ROBERTSON WILSON

GENERAL STATISTICS

Area (in acres)	940
Home Population	7,130
(At the 1951 census the population was 6,874. The home population in 1955 was 6,460).	
Number of inhabited houses at 31/12/56	1,452
Rateable value at 31/12/56	£49,519
Amount produced by a penny rate	£210

VITAL STATISTICS

Births.—74 births (41 males and 33 females) were registered during the year. The birth rate of 15.7 per 1,000 compared with a rate of 11.8 per 1,000 in 1955.

Stillbirths.—There were 2 stillbirths during the year, making a stillbirth rate of 26 per 1,000 total live and stillbirths compared with a rate of 0 in 1955.

Deaths.—48 deaths (21 males and 27 females) were registered during the year. The death rate at 11.0 per 1,000 compared with a death rate of 11.4 per 1,000 in 1955.

Infantile Mortality.—No deaths of infants under one year of age occurred, compared with 0 in 1955.

The infantile mortality rate was 0 compared with a rate of 0 per 1,000 in 1955.

Deaths from Diarrhoea and Enteritis under 2 years of age	0
Maternal Mortality	0
Deaths from Tuberculosis, all ages	0
Deaths from Tuberculosis of the Respiratory System	0
Deaths from Cancer	7

CAUSES OF DEATH

The table below shows the causes of death of Urban District residents in 1956:

Cause of Death	M		F		T
Malignant Neoplasm, stomach	1	...	0	...	1
Malignant Neoplasm, lung, bronchus	1	...	0	...	1
Other Malignant and Lymphatic Neoplasms ...	4	...	1	...	5
Vascular Lesions of Nervous System	1	...	11	...	12
Coronary Disease, Angina	8	...	6	...	14
Other Heart Disease	0	...	2	...	2
Other Circulatory Disease	0	...	3	...	3
Pneumonia	0	...	2	...	2
Gastritis, Enteritis and Diarrhoea	0	...	1	...	1
Other Defined and Ill-defined Diseases	3	...	1	...	4
Motor Vehicle Accidents	3	...	0	...	3
	21	...	27	...	48

The table below shows the comparisons between birth and death rates in England and Wales and this district for the past five years:

Year	England and Wales			Kirkham Urban District	
	Births		Deaths	Births	Deaths
1952	15.3	...	11.3	18.1	13.6
1953	15.5	...	11.4	15.1	12.5
1954	15.2	...	11.3	18.1	12.4
1955	15.0	...	11.7	11.8	11.4
1956	15.7	...	11.7	15.7	11.0

GENERAL PROVISIONS OF HEALTH SERVICES

Personnel:—

Medical Officer of Health:

C. ROBERTSON WILSON, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H. (Edin.)
Other appointments held: Medical Officer of Health Borough of Lytham St. Annes, Urban Districts of Poulton-le-Fylde and Preesall, and Fylde Rural District, Divisional Medical Officer of Health, Health Division No. 3, Lancashire County Council.

Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector:

E. RIDDIOUGH, M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I., A.M.I.P.H.E., L.I.O.B.

Hospital Facilities.—For general cases the main hospitals used are the Preston Royal Infirmary of the Preston and Chorley Hospital Management Committee and the Blackpool Victoria, Wesham Park and Lytham St. Annes Hospitals of the Blackpool and Fylde Hospital Management Committee. Infectious diseases cases are admitted to the Devonshire Road Hospital, Blackpool, excepting in the case of Tuberculosis and Smallpox. Main provision for cases of Tuberculosis is at Elswick Sanatorium. Accommodation for Smallpox is provided by the Manchester Regional Hospital Board at the Ainsworth Smallpox Hospital, near Bury.

Ambulance Facilities.—The Ambulance Service is administered by the Lancashire County Council. The needs of the district are met by vehicles from the Wesham Ambulance Station.

Laboratory Facilities.—Bacteriological examinations of specimens are carried out in laboratories at Blackpool Victoria Hospital and Preston Royal Infirmary. The latter laboratory is also used for the examination of water and milk supplies.

Professional Nursing in the Home.—General nursing cases and confinements are attended by District Nurses and Midwives of the Lancashire County Council.

Venereal Disease Service.—Facilities for treatment of Venereal Disease are available at Blackpool Victoria Hospital and Preston Royal Infirmary.

School Medical and Maternity and Child Welfare Clinics.—A County Council Clinic is located in Mellor Road and sessions held, at the time of preparation of this report, are as follows:

Monday ... a.m. Minor Ailments Clinic.

Tuesday ... p.m. Ante-Natal (alternate Tuesdays).

Thursday ... a.m. Immunisation (third Thursday in each month).

a.m. Minor Ailments.

a.m. Vaccination (third Thursday in each month).

p.m. Child Welfare Clinic.

PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASES

The following table shows the numbers of diseases other than tuberculosis notified during the year 1956.

DISEASES.	CASES NOTIFIED.											HOSPITAL.		
	Total Cases at all ages	Under 1 year.	1—	3—	5—	10—	15—	25—	45—	65 and over.	Age unknown.	Total Deaths.	Total Cases rem'd to Hospital.	Deaths in Hospital of Persons belonging to District.
Smallpox .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Scarlet Fever	24	..	3	7	13	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	24	..
Diphtheria and Membranous Group .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Enteric Fever (inc. Para- typhoid) .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Acute Primary Pneumonia ..	6	..	..	..	..	..	5	..	1	..	..	2	..	..
Acute Influenzal Pneumonia ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Puerperal Fever .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Puerperal Pyrexia .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Cerebro-Spinal Fever .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Acute Poliomyelitis	1	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Acute Polio-encephalitis ....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Encephalitis Lethargica .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Ophthalmia Neonatorum ...	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Dysentery	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Erysipelas	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Malaria contracted abroad ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Do. In this country ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Any other diseases notifiable in district; e.g., Chickenpox	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Measles and German Measles	47	..	10	14	22	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Whooping Cough	4	..	..	2	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Any other disease .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Food Poisoning .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Gastro Enteritis .....	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..
Totals	84	0	13	23	38	2	7	0	1	0	0	3	24	0

TUBERCULOSIS

A tuberculosis service is provided in its various aspects by the Regional Hospital Board, the Lancashire County Council and District Councils. The Hospital Board is responsible mainly for treatment, the County Council for prevention, care and after care, and the Sanitary Authority also for prevention. A Tuberculosis Health Visitor is provided by the Lancashire County Council and the Hospital and Chest Clinic facilities by the Blackpool and Fylde Hospital Management Committee.

New Cases and Mortality during 1956

Age Periods		—New Cases—				—Deaths—			
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
				Non-Pulmon'y				Non-Pulmon'y	
0— 1	.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1— 5	.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
5—10	.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
10—15	.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
15—20	.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
20—25	.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
25—35	.....	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
35—45	.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
45—55	.....	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
55—65	.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
65 and upwards	.....	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals	.....	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		3		0		0		0	

In 1955 there were 2 new cases notified, and 0 deaths reported from the disease.

To the Chairman and Members of the Kirkham
Urban District Council

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present to you my fifth annual report on the work done in the Public Health Department during 1956.

During the year further progress has been made in food shops but the position is not yet satisfactory. Slaughtering within the area presented no great difficulties apart from the time having to be spent on the work. Once again I would request that the Council reconsider the staff of the department and the appointment of a paid Pupil Inspector.

SANITARY CONDITIONS OF THE DISTRICT

The following are the numbers of closets, ashpits, dustbins, etc.:

Water Closets	1,564
Waste Water Closets	3
Pail Closets	0
Privy Closets	0
Privy Ashpits	0
Dry Ashpits	0
Dustbins	1,600
Cesspools	0
Septic Tanks	15
Houses not connected directly to sewer	33
Houses on Water Carriage System	1,451
Percentage of Closets on Water Carriage System ...	99.93
Percentage of Houses connected to General Sewage System	97.72

Sewers and Sewerage System.—The sewerage, in conjunction with that from Wesham, runs to tanks at Newton and then into the River Ribble. The sewerage disposal works consist of two detritus tanks, six settling tanks and fourteen sludge beds. These were constructed in 1941.

The responsibility for the main sewer and sewerage works is held by the Kirkham and Wesham Joint Sewerage Committee.

Four new houses were connected to the sewerage system during the year.

Rivers and Streams.—One main stream—Wrongway Brook—runs through the district, entering from the Fylde Rural District in a culvert under the railway and discharging into Carr Brook and finally to Dow Brook. This stream forms a portion of the Urban District boundary on the easterly side of the town and provides most of the natural drainage for the district.

A second stream, commencing at the Bye-Pass end of Orders Lane, runs down Orders Lane, under Poulton Street and Mill Street in a brick culvert, and discharges into Carr Brook at the north-easterly corner of the Flax Mill land.

Water Supply.—Water is supplied by the Fylde Water Board and is derived from upland surface sources at Grizedale and Higher Hodder. The water supply is of good quality and is adequate in quantity. All houses have supplies available from this source and all have piped supplies available within the house, none being supplied by stand pipes. No complaints were received concerning the water supply.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE DISTRICT

Summary of Complaints Received.—312 complaints were received during the year, of which many were from Council houses for repairs requiring attention. 1,229 visits were made to premises in connection with this work. 312 nuisances were discovered, of which 301 were abated, leaving 11 to carry forward to 1957. 25 informal notices were served during the year, whilst the number of statutory notices served after reports being made to the Committee was 5. No legal proceedings were taken during the year. In the main most complaints were dealt with after consultation with the landlord concerned. In spite of the high cost of maintenance and low rentals, property is reasonably well maintained. In most cases the tenants are reasonable and do most internal repairs themselves. Advantage is being taken to improve old property under the Housing Repairs and Rents Act. The number of defects found and remedied were as follows:

Defect	Private Properties	Council Properties
Siesta Firebars renewed	—	58
Siesta Bricks renewed	—	26
Siesta Mica renewed	—	5
Sofono Bricks renewed	—	47
Sofono Grates renewed	—	11
Sofono Ashpan renewed	—	1
Clayco Grates renewed	—	11
Clayco Bricks renewed	—	2
Clayco Ashpan renewed	—	1
Eagle Sutton Grates renewed	—	5
Eagle Sutton Bricks renewed	—	3
Fireback brickwork rebuilt	—	7
Damper frame repaired	—	1
Burst circulator repaired	—	1
Chimney breast made good	—	1
Colt Cowl fitted	—	1
Flue repaired	—	1
Leaking boiler repaired	—	1
Ball taps repaired or renewed	—	47

Defect	Private Properties	Council Properties
Overflows repaired	—	2
New W.C. pedestals fixed	1	8
Frozen pipes thawed out	—	33
Ball taps thawed out	—	1
Cylinders repaired or renewed	—	3
Burst pipes repaired	—	26
Defects on water systems repaired	—	5
Gutters repaired or renewed	4	5
Taps rewashed	—	2
W.C. seat hinges repaired or renewed	—	2
Cone joints repaired or renewed	—	7
W.C. seats repaired or renewed	—	7
Leaking soil pipe joints repaired	—	3
Sink wastes repaired	—	2
Sinks unstopped	—	4
Taps repaired	—	11
Bath panel refixed	—	1
W.C. levers repaired	—	4
Cisterns repaired	—	1
New boilers supplied	—	2
Lavatory basins made secure	—	5
Rainwater pipe offsets reset	—	2
Water service repaired	2	1
Defective syphon repaired	—	1
Electric plugs repaired or renewed	—	31
Electric switches repaired or renewed	—	17
Lampholders repaired	—	11
Electric cooker repaired	—	1
Immersion heaters repaired	—	2
Gas leaks repaired	—	3
Gas boilers refixed	—	2
New gas boiler fixed	—	1
Gas stove repaired	—	1
New gas points fixed	—	6
Gas boilers removed	—	2
Windows eased	—	1
Windows rehung or made secure	—	9
Window hinges repaired or renewed	—	4
Windows reglazed	—	4
Opening lights eased	—	16
Soffits repaired	—	2
Floors repaired	2	3
Doors eased or refitted	—	36
Weatherboards fixed	—	10
Thresholds fixed	—	6
Door locks repaired or renewed	—	30
Stairs handrail secured	—	1
New letterbox fitted	—	1
Copings made secure	—	1
Pointing made good	—	1
Air bricks fitted	2	8
Wall plaster repaired	—	11
Ceiling plaster repaired	—	2
Drains repaired	1	3
Roofs repaired	3	6
Paths repaired	—	6
Garden wall rebuilt	—	1
Cement rendering repaired	—	1
Frame mastic pointed	1	1
Manhole covers renewed	—	2
New dustbins supplied	9	3

DISINFESTATIONS

Three houses were disinfested for fleas and bugs. None were Council houses. Free issues of insect powder are available to the public, and a free disinfestation service is provided.

DISINFECTION AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Twenty-eight houses were visited for investigation in connection with infectious diseases and instructions were given and disinfectant supplied to the householders for disinfecting their premises. There was no other demand for disinfection of premises. Library books were collected from houses where infectious diseases occurred and were disinfected before return to the Library.

SCHOOLS

The schools were inspected on occasion and were satisfactory apart from minor repairs. All are supplied with water by the Fylde Water Board and all have water closets connected to the sewer. Under an agreement between the Council and the County Education Committee I continued to act as Technical Officer for the Committee for schools in the district. This is a good scheme, as it enables small matters to be dealt with at once without having some other person responsible.

COMMON LODGING HOUSES, ETC.

There are no common lodging houses or offensive trades within the district.

One application was received for permission to station a caravan within the district. This was granted a six monthly licence. The owner of the site referred to in my previous year's report applied for planning permission for caravans on his land and permission was given to his outline application for 30 vans for holiday use subject to the submission of a satisfactory layout, detail plans, etc. This was not received and enforcement action will be taken. The present method of dealing with caravan sites is most unsatisfactory, it being most difficult to keep a check on any particular van. Vans arrive and as there is no compulsory method of registration or checking, each individual van is difficult to identify as colours and owners change though the van remains on the site.

OTHER PUBLIC HEALTH MATTERS

During the year no further applications from persons to be registered as Dealers in Old Metals under Section 86 of the Public Health Act Amendment Act, 1907, were received.

One certificate in respect of means of escape in case of fire was issued to a workshop.

Observations were taken on four factory chimneys within the town. On advice from the Department one firm agreed to obtain advice on their plant from a representative of the National Industrial Fuel Efficiency Service and a marked improvement was obtained as a result. A constant watch is kept on the remaining chimneys and interviews are made with the firm's representatives when trouble occurs.

HOUSE AND TRADE REFUSE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL

The Council carried out all refuse collection and disposal. The new fore and aft tipper-type lorry was delivered and has proved an asset to the service though some improvement could still be made. The Bedford three-tonner has been held in reserve. No labour difficulties have been experienced but it is recommended that the Council appoint a General Working Foreman. Such a man could prove to be invaluable to a small Council.

Disposal is carried out at Carr Lane tip. Soil has been removed from the ground to be tipped on and placed on land already tipped up. A portion of the tip which has been soiled and completed was let to a local farmer and a crop of oats was successfully grown on this land. The old destructor was retained in use for burning unsound meat, unsalvageable paper, etc.

Salvage collection was maintained and the bonus scheme for the men continued. Unfortunately, due to restrictions on waste paper, the collection was restricted to 80 tons per year. All waste paper is still sent to Thames Board Mills Ltd., under contract. A small tin baling press was acquired from a neighbouring authority and tins are now baled. Some 22 tons were baled and despatched in the year.

The total income during the year was £1,615, being £1,199 from the sale of salvage and £416 from the R.A.F. for an extra weekly collection. The tonnage salvaged was as follows:

	Tons	Cwts.	Qtrs.
Waste Paper (all grades)	99	11	1
Rags	11	8	1
Food Tins	22	16	2
Cast Iron, Scrap, Mixed Metals, etc.	13	9	1
	147	5	1

The total cost of refuse collection and disposal was £3,833, equal to a 1/4d. rate. The increased costs over last year were mainly due to wage increases.

FOOD AND DRUGS ADMINISTRATION

Visits were made to premises where foodstuffs were handled or sold.

The number of visits made to food premises during the year, including the slaughterhouse, was 179.

Some improvements have been made to food premises most of which were carried out as a result of informal action. This work is proceeding. Follow-up visits have been made particularly to a local food factory the subject of previous legal actions.

The following items of food were inspected, found unfit and surrendered by shopkeepers for destruction.

26 $\frac{1}{4}$ lbs. Corned Beef	4 qts. Shrimps
40 lbs. Williams Pears	$\frac{3}{4}$ pint Tinned Milk
7 $\frac{3}{4}$ ozs. Salmon	6 lbs. Canned Apples
574 lbs. Sides of Pork	1 tin Pork Luncheon Meat
54 lbs. Hindquarter Beef	

One slaughterhouse is in operation in the district. All meat is inspected and the premises are satisfactory. The owners of this slaughterhouse have been most co-operative and improvements are being made from time to time. A new meat cooling and hanging room has been built on to the slaughterhouse.

Carcases inspected and condemned were as follows:

	Cattle excluding Cows cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs
Number killed	277	5	25	772	17
Number inspected	277	5	25	772	17
All diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysticerci :					
Whole carcasses condemned	1	—	1	—	—
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	91	—	—	1	—
Percentage of the number in- spected affected with disease other than Tuberculosis and Cysticerci	36.8	—	—	0.1	—
Tuberculosis only :					
Whole carcasses condemned	—	—	—	—	—
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	14	—	—	—	—
Percentage of number inspected affected with Tuberculosis	5.0	—	—	—	—
Cysticercosis :					
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned	3	—	—	—	—
Carcasses submitted to treat- ment by refrigeration	1	—	—	—	—
Generalised and totally condemned	—	—	—	—	—

The total weight of meat condemned (including offal) was 1,798 lbs.

Milk Supply and Distribution.—There is one large dairy and pasteurising plant in the town supplying milk to the surrounding districts. The supervision of this plant is done by the Lancashire County Council. The number of registered dealers is as follows:

Licensed to sell Pasteurised Milk	10
Licensed to sell Tuberculin Tested Milk Pasteurised	8
Licensed to sell Sterilised Milk	7
Licensed to sell Tuberculin Tested Milk Farm Bottled	8

No complaints were received in regard to the milk supply. Only “specially designated” milk (that is, pasteurised, sterilised or tuberculin tested milk) can now be sold in Kirkham under the provisions of The Milk (Special Designations) (Specified Areas) (No. 2) Order, 1955, which came into force on the 6th December, 1955.

Ice Cream.—There is one registration for the manufacture of ice cream. The premises have been inspected and always found to be well run and maintained. Twenty-six dealers are registered for the sale and storage of ice cream. The general standard of vehicles and equipment is high. No complaints were received in regard to ice cream. A previous small manufacturer ceased to make ice cream and his registration was withdrawn at his request.

Made-up Foods, Potted Meats, etc.—Four premises are registered to manufacture made-up meat products. A good standard of cleanliness was maintained.

Food Sampling by the County Council.—Forty-six samples were taken by County Inspectors during the year, comprising:

39 Milk	1 Blackcurrant Syrup
1 Ice Lolly	1 Fruit (canned)
1 Ice Cream	1 Milk (condensed, skimmed and
1 Butter	sweetened)
1 Cough Mixture	

All the samples were analysed by the County Analyst and were reported to be genuine.

SHOPS AND OFFICES

Forty-seven visits were made in connection with the Shops Acts,

FACTORIES ACT, 1937

(1) INSPECTIONS FOR PURPOSES OF PROVISIONS AS TO HEALTH INCLUDING INSPECTIONS MADE BY SANITARY INSPECTOR.

Premises	Number of		
	Inspections	Written Notices	Occupiers prosecuted
Factories with Mechanical power ...	8	—	—
Factories without Mechanical power	—	—	—
Other premises under the Act (including Building and Engineering construction, but not including outworkers' premises)	—	—	—
Total	8	—	—

(2) DEFECTS FOUND.

PARTICULARS.	Number of Defects.			Number of Defects in respect of which Prosecutions were Instituted
	Found	Remedied	Referred by H.M. Inspector	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Want of Cleanliness (S.1)	—	—	—	—
Overcrowding (S.2)	—	—	—	—
Unreasonable temperature (S.3) ...	—	—	—	—
Inadequate Ventilation (S.4)	—	—	—	—
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6) .	—	—	—	—
Sanitary conveniences (S.7):—				
Insufficient	—	—	—	—
Unsuitable or defective	—	—	—	—
Not separate for sexes	—	—	—	—
Other Offences	3	3	—	—
Total	3	3	—	—

RAG-FLOCK AND OTHER FILLING MATERIALS ACT, 1951

Two premises are registered under the above Act. Four inspections were made of them during the year. No samples were taken. The amount of this material used is very small,

RODENT CONTROL

Fifty-one properties infested by rats or mice were treated during the year by the Rodent Operator. This man has had Ministry training in modern methods and has had much success. The standard Ministry methods are used. The sewers were treated twice and thirty-four takes recorded. The amount of sewer infestation appears to be small.

PETROLEUM ACTS

Sixteen premises are licensed to store petroleum. In every case the petroleum is stored in underground tanks. The total storage capacity is 20,580 gallons. No notices were served under these Acts, and no new premises were licensed.

HOUSING

Number of houses on Rate Books	1,452
Number of new houses erected during the year:	
(a) by the Local Authority	0
(b) By other bodies or persons	4
Number of houses demolished during the year	0
Number of persons displaced	0
Number of improvement grant applications received during the year	11
Number of houses in which improvement works were completed during the year	6

Housing Conditions.—The general housing conditions are fair, the houses being mostly small to medium-sized of both parlour and non-parlour type. There is a considerable proportion of old property in the district requiring demolition or improvement when accommodation is available. A few people have taken advantage of the facilities offered by the Council to improve property by means of an Improvement Grant. Although many of the old houses are of poor external appearance, they are mainly well kept and the internal condition is good. In the main tenants show great pride in their houses.

It is difficult to estimate the demand for houses, as conditions are constantly changing, but it is estimated that some 140 are still required, over 50% of which should be of the three-bedroom type with a few four-bedroom and the remainder two-bedroom.

The Council have considered some types suitable for old persons in the next programme.

The shortage of building land in the town is affecting both the Council and private builders. The Council have acquired certain small plots suitable for infilling.

Many houses are still sub-standard but where it is felt that the houses could be improved landlords and owner/occupiers are encouraged to apply for an improvement grant and 11 applications were received during the year. The results of these are excellent and have made first-class houses. There are still many houses adequately suitable for improvement and it is hoped that further advantage will be taken of this provision. Applicants are given full advice and help from the Department.

The Council have continued to give every opportunity to prospective buyers by operating the Small Dwellings Acquisition Acts and by standing as guarantors for persons buying through Building Societies.

STAFF

As previously mentioned, the question of additional staff requires further consideration by the Council. No foreman is employed and a good proportion of time is still spent in dealing with workmen, measuring for and ordering materials for the Surveyor's side of the work, etc.

My thanks are again expressed for the efficient service rendered by Mr. N. Swift, the Clerk in the Department, and for the excellent and willing co-operation from other members of the staff and workmen.

I remain,

Your obedient servant,

E. RIDDIOUGH.

